



# SUPPORTING FRIENDLIER, MORE NEIGHBOURLY MULTI-UNIT BUILDINGS IN VANCOUVER

Aylin Tavakoli  
Healthy City Scholar  
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City of Vancouver  
Social Policy and Housing Policy  
Mentor: Keltie Craig

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# Executive Summary

Loneliness and isolation is becoming a global epidemic. Perhaps the greatest irony - and tragedy - of modernity is that despite the "technological revolution," we have never been so disconnected. More Canadians than ever live alone, and almost one-quarter describe themselves as lonely. Loneliness has been linked to depression, anxiety, interpersonal hostility, vulnerability to health problems, and even to suicide.

The City of Vancouver seeks to better understand the linkages between sociability and well-being through its Healthy City Strategy goals of "Cultivating Connections", "Being and Feeling Safe and Included", and "A Home for Everyone". This project examines the impact of design and social programming in sociability of multi-unit housing through a case study of friendly buildings in Vancouver.

Our study of 17 multi-unit buildings that were identified as friendly by their residents showed that a combination of design and programming factors are needed to achieve social connectedness among neighbours. Rental apartments, strata condominiums, co-ops and co-housing developments were visited and their resident(s)/property manager(s) were interviewed. The buildings in the study ranged from decade-old townhouses in East Vancouver to a recent high-rise development in Chinatown. The average building was about 8 stories and included about 100 units. All had a very high walkability score and great access to transit. The majority of the buildings were developed under the comprehensive development zoning for multi-unit high-rise apartments. A few were mixed-use buildings developed on industrial zones. Demographics of the buildings were singles, families and seniors with families being prominent in more than 50% of the buildings.

Our examination of the hard infrastructure and architectural elements of the buildings revealed that having exterior corridors, wide walkways, multiple gathering and sharing spaces, community gardens and private central courtyards and playgrounds can have a positive impact on increasing neighbourly connections. However, just having amenity rooms and a great greenspace did not result in the creation of a strong sense of community belonging within the buildings. Soft infrastructure such as social programs/events, resident champions, and skilled property managers, as well as supportive strata councils were vital pieces in activating these spaces. Having a local business or public destination at the ground level was also noted as a positive connector for residents.

Effective communication was identified as a major contributor to building connections. The property managers of most buildings used list serves to communicate with residents, whereas neighbours used bulletin boards to post items or used mobile messaging to socialize.

A "Friendly Building Field Trip" will take place in the fall of 2017 where the findings of this research will be shared with industry leaders to demonstrate best practices. The aim is to initiate a conversation around developing more neighbourly multi-unit buildings. These outcomes will also provide input to City of Vancouver's new high-density family housing guidelines.

# Introduction

Cities around the world are faced with rapid population growth, climate change and increased inequality. According to United Nations, by 2050 nearly 90% of the world's population will be living in urban areas<sup>1</sup>. Faced with such significant migration factors and limited urban land, cities are growing vertically into high-density urban centers. While denser, multi-unit homes have been linked to a lower ecological footprint and more sustainable life styles<sup>2</sup>, they have also been associated with increased isolation, depression, insecurity and other negative health outcomes<sup>3</sup>. Loneliness has been shown to be as bad for your health as smoking or obesity; it suppresses the immune system and cardiovascular function, increases the amount of stress hormone the body produces, causes wear and tear on a cellular level, and impairs sleep.<sup>4</sup> As author Charles Montgomery writes, "Social isolation just may be the greatest environmental hazard of city living, worse than noise, pollution, or even crowding."<sup>5</sup>

Vancouver is not an exception to this reality of growth. Bounded by the Pacific Ocean and the Coast mountains, Vancouver has been densifying as it has become one of the most desirable places to live. This trend will continue as the metropolitan area is preparing for a 1.2 million population increase by 2041. From the perspective of social health and resiliency, it is vital that Vancouver monitors and enhances the well-being of its residents – including those living in multi-unit buildings. Knowing one's neighbours and feeling connected to fellow residents can lead to more positive health effects and increase in resiliency in responding to disasters and crises.

This project aims to understand the relationship between sociability and well-being, and examines how sociability can be enhanced through design and programming of multi-unit buildings. It responds to multiple goals within the City of Vancouver Healthy Strategy (HCS). The HCS outlines the goals and actions required to build a healthy city for all which includes creating and enhancing the conditions that enable all residents to enjoy a high level of health and well-being.



*City of Vancouver (Source City-data.com)*

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Urbanization Prospect (2011)

<sup>2</sup> Seven Rules for Sustainable Communities (2010)

<sup>3</sup> The Consequences of Living in High-Rise Buildings (2012) & Social Isolation (2011)

<sup>4</sup> "Life of Solitude: A loneliness crisis is looming," Globe and Mail. Renzetti. (11.23.2013)

<sup>5</sup> Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design. Montgomery, C. (2013)

# Introduction

## The Vancouver Context

Vancouver's population is rapidly growing with an influx of new immigrants, refugees and people from other places in Canada. According to the 2016 census, the city's population has grown by 4.6% but more families are leaving Vancouver due to a lack of affordability. The data also showed that the percentage of one-person households is at its peak (28%) and has been steadily increasing over the past decade<sup>6</sup>. Research has shown that both living alone and living in high density buildings are associated with poor health outcomes<sup>7</sup>. In addition, a large body of knowledge has identified a lack of social connections as an important determinant of health<sup>8</sup>.

### *Social Isolation*

The Vancouver Foundation's 2012 "Connections and Engagement" survey identified that loneliness, disconnection and isolation were top issues impacting Vancouverites. This was experienced by both new immigrants and long-time Vancouverites including the elderly. The My Health My Community 2014 survey<sup>9</sup> also showed that only 50% of Vancouver's adult population had more than four people in their social circle to rely on in times of need, and 54% felt a sense of community.

### *Housing Stock*

60% of the city's housing stock are apartments and twice as many people live in multi-unit buildings compared to single-family homes. Vancouver's population is almost evenly distributed between renters and owners.<sup>10</sup> The "Connections and Engagement" survey showed that neighbourly connections among residents vary with building types and their tenure. Less than 50% of respondents living in apartments were likely to chat with their neighbours; 43% of respondents said that they do not know the name of at least two of their neighbours; and 77% have never done simple favours for their neighbors. Renters expressed that overall, they feel a weaker sense of belonging to their neighbourhood compared to home owners by 10%. They were also less likely to know the name of their neighbours and have chatted with them.

### *Community Building*

Relationships are the foundation of a good life. A sense of isolation and detachment from community lowers self-confidence and quality of life. People with strong social networks can rely on their connections for support, healing and many other aspects of life which will increase their quality of life. Communities that exhibit higher levels of connections, neighbourliness and social cohesion also show better self-reported physical and mental health, as well as increased resilience to disasters<sup>11</sup>. Different types of households experience isolation and lack of social connection in different ways. The rise of one-person households in Vancouver has left many singles and seniors physically isolated in their homes. For families, the time and resource challenge of meeting family and work commitments can make participation in social and civic life very challenging. The rising cost of living, especially housing, makes participating in community life especially difficult for lower income, single parents and new immigrant households.

Striving to create a healthy city for all, the City of Vancouver has been forming partnerships and implementing interventions to build a stronger urban community for adults and families. Through these partnerships and the work described in this report, the City of Vancouver aims to:

- increase awareness of friendlier and more neighbourly multi-unit housing,
- spur stakeholder engagement within the development, design, and property management industries, and
- inform potential policy change and industry direction.

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<sup>6</sup> Census Data (2016)

<sup>7</sup> Vancouver Foundation Connect and Engaged Survey (2012)

<sup>8</sup> Living up, or Living Apart? Addressing the Social Consequences of High-Rise Living (2016)

<sup>9</sup> My Health My Community (2013)

<sup>10</sup> Vancouver Housing & Homelessness Strategy Reset – Emerging Directions (2017)

<sup>11</sup> City of Vancouver - Healthy City Strategy (2014)

# Introduction

## Project Components

The goal of this project was to create a better understanding of the impact sociable building design and soft infrastructure such as programming has on the sense of community belonging and connectedness, and mental and physical well-being of residents. The research was focused on a literature review and developing case studies of best practices. The primary components of this project were:

1. Creating detailed profiles of best practices for friendly multi-unit buildings in Vancouver via case studies to understand the impact of soft or hard infrastructure in achieving social cohesion;
2. Designing and recruiting participants for a “Friendly Multi-Unit Building Field Trip”, aimed at showcasing existing buildings that feature design and programming best practice and creating an opportunity for dialogue and discussion between industry players, designers, and planners;
3. Creating an inventory of communication websites/ apps that help connect neighbourhoods and residents (see slides in Appendix); and
4. Liaising with Planning, Housing and Social Policy staff and key external stakeholders such as Happy City to facilitate conversations and share learnings.

Create a detailed inventory of friendly buildings



Plan a “Friendly Multi-unit Building Field Trip”



Create an inventory of online platforms for resident connectivity



Share research learnings and facilitate discussions with key stakeholders



# Introduction

## Research Approach

A mixed methodology was used to collect qualitative and quantitative data for different components of this research. In addition, prior research and reports were reviewed to inform the overall project and to evaluate how they fit within the current body of work done by the City of Vancouver.

### *Friendly Building Inventory*

- Identification of buildings was performed by:
  - Reaching out to industry experts
    - Happy City, a major collaborator with CoV in this work, has compiled a list of about 90 interested stakeholders on the topic of friendly building designs. An email was sent out to these individuals to receive suggestions on exemplary buildings.
  - Conducting a social media campaign
    - A two week long social media campaign on CoV Facebook and Twitter accounts was conducted to solicit public suggestions. We received over 20 responses with suggested case studies.
  - Referrals from CoV employees and personal contacts
- Interviews with residents and building managers:
  - A questionnaire was created in collaboration with Housing Policy and Happy City that was used to collect information about each of the buildings identified (see Appendix I).

### *Website/App Inventory*

- Identification of online platforms was done through:
  - Reaching out to partners who interacted with such platforms
  - Searching online to find the best examples in this field

## Limitations

This project is one of the early steps towards research into the social design of vertical communities in Vancouver. It uses an opportunistic approach to scan some of the successful efforts exhibited within the current guidelines and policies rather than a comprehensive approach to offer a complete list of best examples. We realize that there is a large number of best practice examples both in friendly buildings and online neighbour communication platforms that are not present in the body of this work.

Friendliness of buildings was primarily evaluated by residents, and no external criteria were used to measure the level of connections between the residents or their attachment to their building. We acknowledge that resident's opinions are subjective and can be biased. We attempted to limit this subjectivity by talking to more than one resident and also talking to building managers. In addition, the online neighbour communication websites and apps were identified by an online search and through recommendations by others. This is by no means a comprehensive list of the leaders in this industry.

## Report structure

This report is broken down into the following:

- 1) Policy context to position this research within the current strategies and priorities of the City of Vancouver;
- 2) Review of literature and previous studies on the influence of building design and programming on social well-being;
- 3) Primary research of good examples of friendly buildings in Vancouver and learnings from them; and lastly
- 4) Recommendations for the City of Vancouver on moving this research forward.



# Policy Context

The neighbourly multi-unit building work relates to several goals from the Healthy City Strategy. It also supports goals from the City’s “Greenest City Action Plan”, “Climate Change Adaptation Plan”, “Engaged City Task Force”, and “Earthquake Preparedness Plan”.

This project supports three main HCS goals that are listed below.

## Goal 2: Providing a Home for Everyone

According to the UN Habitat III housing policy framework, housing needs to be affordable and adequate. Singles, couples and families need to be able to afford to live in healthy connected communities and homes. Vancouver’s target is to reduce the number of households that spend 30% or more of their income on housing.

Providing adequate housing ensures sufficient living space, resilient structures and security of tenure. These principles also impact social connectedness in communities by allowing families to stay longer within their neighborhoods.

## Goal 6: Being and Feeling Safe and Included

54% of Vancouver adults stated that they feel a strong or somewhat strong sense of community belonging in Vancouver. By building environments that cultivate connections and increase safety among residents, the HCS is working towards increasing Vancouver residents’ sense of community belonging by 10%.

## Goal 7: Cultivating Connections

The HCS goal is to increase the network size and the sense of trust of Vancouverites. The target is that Vancouverites have at least four people in their network they can rely on for support in times of need. This is being achieved by: (i) examining regulations, policies and processes that affect the relationships of residents, and (ii) creating new social connection initiatives, reinvigorating existing initiatives, and magnifying their collective impact with the collaboration of partners.

In the fall of 2017, CoV’s Housing Policy team is starting a planning process to update its High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines from 1992. The findings from this report will be used to support the public engagement and policy creation of that work.



# Friendly Buildings - An Overview

The impact of high-density living has been a much-debated topic by scholars. Many such as Jacobs (1961) and Condon (2010) argue that living in high-density areas results in higher diversity, less urban sprawl and shorter commute time. Others, including Cacioppo (2011) and Gifford (2007), have associated living in high-rises with depression, loneliness and feeling unsafe. Even though such a correlation exists, densification alone cannot be blamed for all our urban sociological problems as there is more research required to prove causation between the two. After accounting for the moderating factors, however, Gifford's research has shown "high-rises are less satisfactory than other housing forms for most people, that they are not optimal for children, that social relations are more impersonal and helping behavior is less than in other housing forms, that crime and fear of crime are greater, and that they may independently account for some suicides."

Other research from the United Way in Toronto on [vertical poverty](#) indicates that "Good housing is essential for the health and stability of neighbourhoods. When housing conditions are satisfactory, people are likely to stay longer in their accommodation and develop an attachment to their neighbourhoods". In this report, residents found that lack of amenity spaces results in problems for seniors and youth such as social isolation, disruptive behaviour and high levels of distrust among the neighbours.

The "Happy Homes Toolkit 2017" report by Happy City shows an association between eating alone and poor health and well-being. It also notes that people who experience too little daylight exposure tend to suffer more from sadness, fatigue and even clinical depression.

These are all elements that can be either directly or indirectly addressed through design and programming of buildings. Understanding these influencing factors and how they affect people's lives can help developers and planners create more livable and happy multi-unit housing for citizens. Living in high rises is a very likely part of the future of Vancouver, and we need to learn to do it in the best possible way.

## Past Work

Since the 1990s, Vancouver has been heralded as a livable, higher-density City. A major contributor to that livability has been the [High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines \(1992\)](#) to provide guidance on the location, form, design and amenities expected in new developments that included family units, to ensure livability of those units for families. The guidelines apply to new conditional-approval market and non-market multi-family projects of "75 or more units per hectare". The guidelines are not mandatory requirements, but instead set an expected benchmark for projects to strive to achieve. The guidelines are used by staff in conjunction with zoning by-laws or official development plans in reviewing multi-family residential projects.

At the time the Guidelines were drafted, average apartment unit sizes were larger, apartment and condo living was less common for families with children, and more traditional family oriented housing stock (single family homes, townhomes) was still affordable for middle income families. Today Vancouver families have different housing needs and challenges. The majority of growth in Vancouver's housing stock over the past two decades has been in apartments which made up 60% of the total stock in the 2011 Census. The number of families living in apartments has also grown with 31% of Vancouver families living in apartments in 2011 compared to only 18% in 1991.

Over the past five years, the City of Vancouver has partnered up with academic institutions and consultants to extend the local body of knowledge on high-density living, resiliency, social connections and well-being. In 2014 a UBC Greenest City Scholar looked at "[Building Neighbourhood Social Resilience](#)" and identified some best practices in the local and international context on strengthening neighbourly connections. As part of this research, a pilot study was conducted in a Vancouver rental residential building. Residents were brought together over dinner to connect, and in the process, increase resiliency and emergency preparedness. The goal of the project was to initiate a neighbour to neighbour connection that would continue long term and enhance resident's preparedness at the time of a disaster.

In the summer of 2014, CityStudio launched a pilot concierge project called "[Ask Lauren](#)" in a Vancouver rental building. This experiment was to test the impact that a community concierge can have on connecting neighbours. The project learnings were used to create a toolkit.

# Friendly Buildings - An Overview

In 2015, a UBC student working with CityStudio researched "[Social Connectedness in High Density Living in Vancouver](#)" which covered an in-depth literature review and financial viability of building friendly multi-unit housing. Some of the findings of this research have been discussed above.

In 2016 a consultant created a report "Living up, or Living Apart?" based on interviews with industry players such as developers and property managers on the topic of social isolation and the role of the development industry in addressing it. The findings of this research show that: (i) there is a lack of awareness and understanding of the issue, (ii) the industry does not always know what works, or why, (iii) design matters and shared spaces are lacking, (iv) the business case is tough to make in this real-estate market; (v) property managers can be assets, allies and champions, and lastly (vi) the City can be a leader in this movement. Based on these findings and the recommendations to the City, the "Friendly Multi-Unit Building Project" aims to showcase the impact that developers can have through effective design in enhancing connections among residents. Also, it outlines how property managers can be key players in creating and supporting social programs, and showcasing best practices.

In July 2017, Happy City published a set of 10 principles in the form of a toolkit called "[Happy Homes](#)". These findings were shared with a group of City employees to raise awareness about this topic and to start a conversation on the alignment of the City's practices with these guidelines.



*Happy Homes Principles*

In addition to these studies, many local municipalities in Canada have also been able to implement strategies that encourage more friendly/neighbourly design and were successful in introducing change through new policy. In 2017 the City of Toronto released its family friendly high-density housing guidelines that encourage child-friendly urban design elements at the unit, building and neighborhood levels. This new guide was developed based on extensive research done through the "[Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities](#)" initiative that studied local and international best practices.

In 2015, the City of North Vancouver introduced its "[Active Design Guidelines](#)" that required developers to follow a set of design guidelines in new developments. These guidelines aimed to not only create a healthy environment through design that encourages physical activity but also enhance a sense of community belonging and connections among the residents.

These examples can be used to learn about creating new policies and effectively implementing them through collaboration with the development industry. Findings from the "Friendly Multi-Unit Building" project will be used

# Friendly Buildings - An Overview

to develop policies that can reinforce construction of multi-unit buildings with social connectivity embedded in their design and delivery.

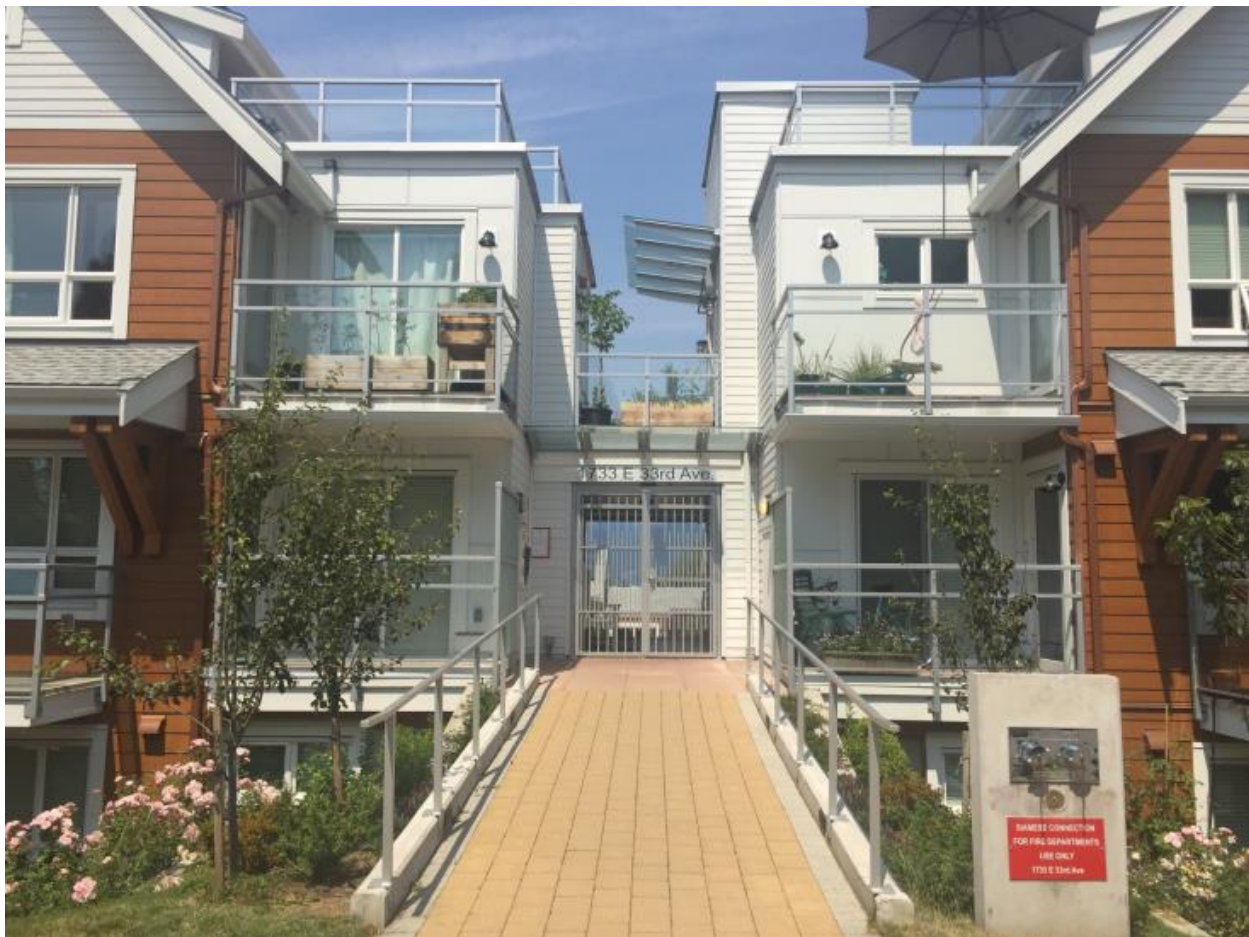
## Terms and Definitions

### Definition of High Density

There is no universal definition for a high-density building. In most literature, high-density residential buildings are considered between 10 and 30 stories - although many are above 50 stories<sup>12</sup>. For the purpose of this project we looked at multi-unit buildings ranging from two to 20 stories.

### Definition of Social Connections

Social connection refers to participation, trust, and the social bond among people. Other elements such as inclusion vs. exclusion, equality, income distribution, access, etc. are also important considerations when evaluating the level of sociability. However, they are not discussed in this research as they relate to social cohesion and not connections<sup>13</sup>.



*Vancouver Co-housing*

<sup>12</sup> Friendly and Financially Viable? The Case of Social Connectedness in High Density Living in Vancouver, BC (2015)

<sup>13</sup> Social cohesion: Updating the state of the research (2012)

# Friendly Buildings - An Overview

## Background

Seventeen buildings were visited and a select number of their residents and/or property managers were interviewed. The buildings were shortlisted based on nominations by their residents. For this reason, the measure of friendliness of the buildings is subjective based on what each resident identified as friendly. In some cases, a building was considered friendly when interviewees knew many of their neighbours by name; in other cases, it was when a building had a friendly concierge and a welcoming lobby that people would linger in. Most of the interviewees were residents (18) and some were property managers (3). Some of the residents were also part of the strata council who could provide additional detailed information about the property.

## Locations

As seen in Figure 1, most of the multi-unit buildings were located in East Vancouver, with a few in Downtown and South Vancouver. One successful co-housing complex on the North Shore was also studied. Overall, they were situated within highly walkable (average Walk Score 93) and transit accessible<sup>14</sup> (average Transit Score 82) neighbourhoods. The buildings were on average 17 years old.

Average Walk Score  
**93.1**

Average Transit Score  
**81.7**

- 1 3333 Main
- 2 The Artiste
- 3 Blue Sky
- 4 Brix I
- 5 District Main
- 6 False Creek Coop
- 7 Forte
- 8 The James
- 9 Mainspace Lofts
- 10 Martinique
- 11 Quayside Village Cohousing
- 12 Siena Of Portico
- 13 Sixteen Willows
- 14 The Social
- 15 The Works Building
- 16 Vancouver Cohousing
- 17 Woodward's - Family Housing

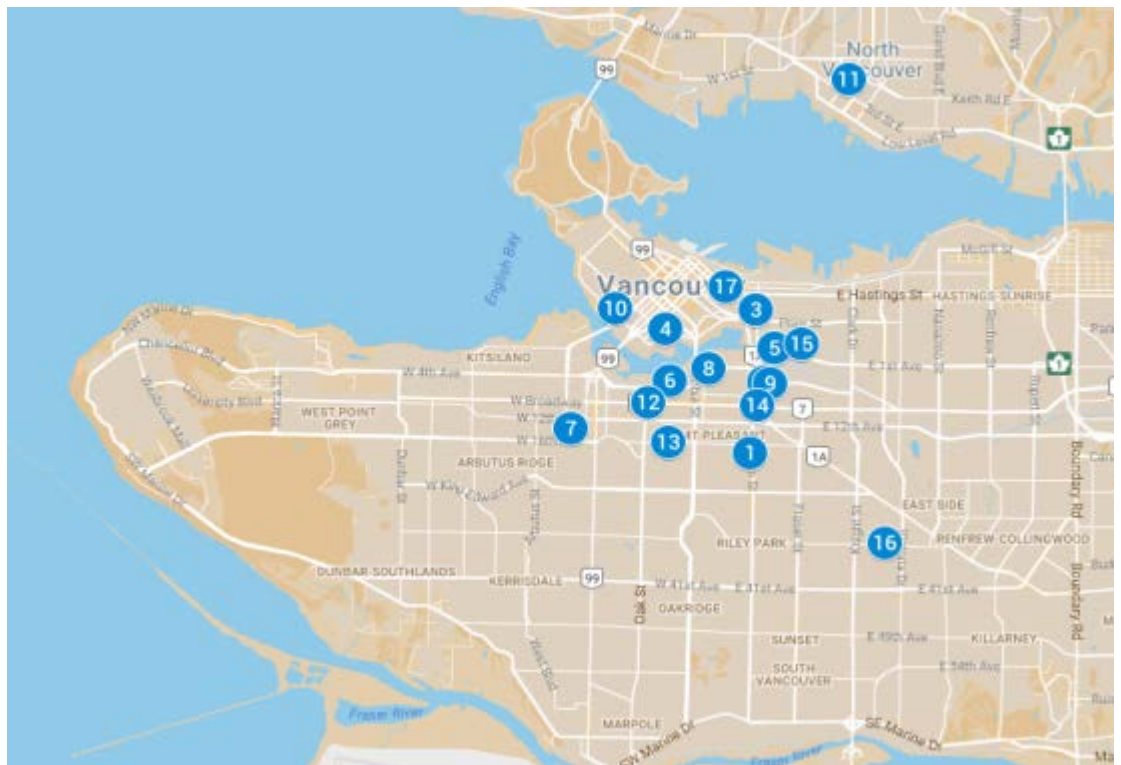


Figure 1- Friendly Buildings in Vancouver

<sup>14</sup> Source: [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com)

# Friendly Buildings - An Overview

## Tenure

More than half of the buildings were strata, owner occupied, with rentals allowed with some level of restriction. Four rentals made up the rest of the portfolio along with two co-housing and one co-op complex. The final property was a lease, with both owners and renters but without an official strata council.

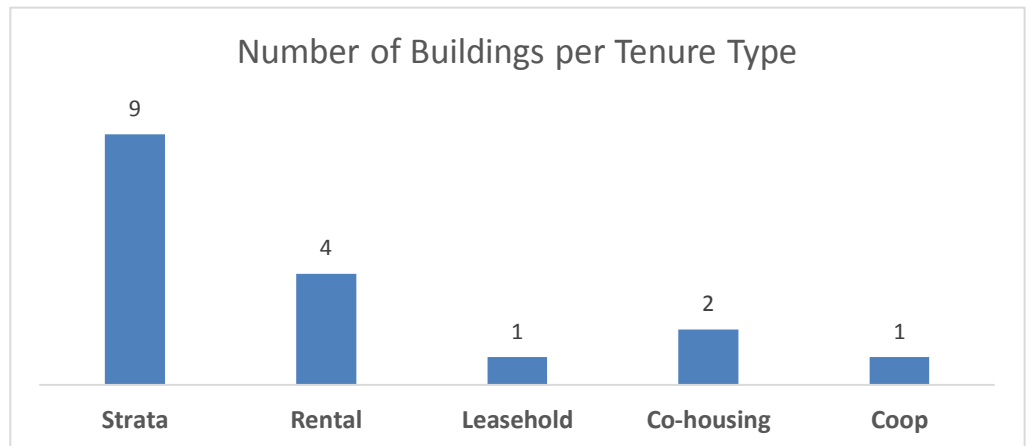


Figure 2 - Number of Buildings per Tenure Type

## Unit Structure

Five of the buildings were townhouses which included family/ground oriented developments, a co-op and two co-housing examples. Four were a mix of townhouses and mid to high rise developments, and eight were stand-alone mid to high-rise buildings. Most of the townhouses had three bedrooms.



5 Townhouses



4 Townhouse and high-rises



8 High-rises



2 Lofts



7 One and Two Bedrooms



8 Three bedrooms

## Communication Method

Most building used email lists or posters and notices on bulletins for communication.



Facebook

5 buildings



Online Communication Tools (Bazinga)

1 building



List serves (Google group)

6 buildings



WhatsApp or iMessage

2 buildings



Bulletin Boards

11 buildings



Newsletters

1 building

# Friendly Buildings - An Overview

## Density and Height

The buildings ranged from two story townhouses to 18 story high-rises with an average of about 100 units. See the complete distribution in Figure 3.

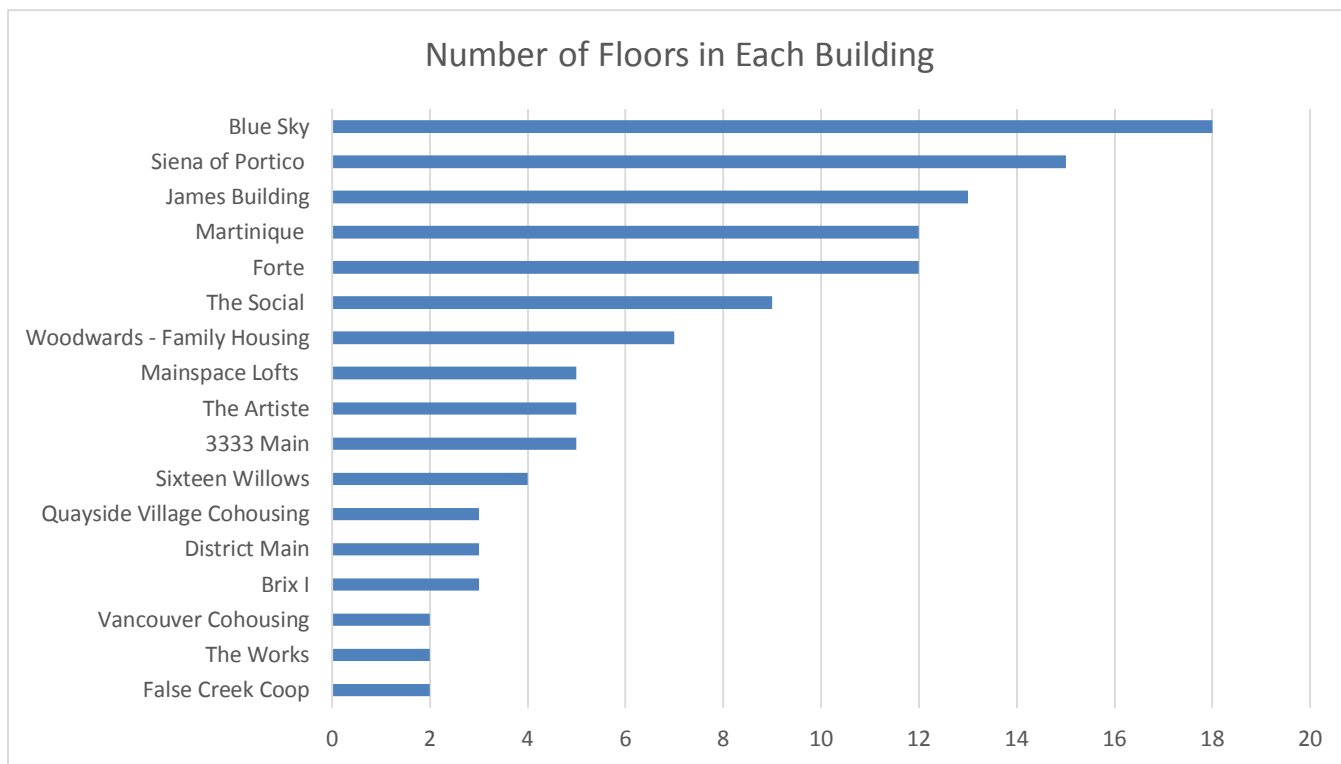


Figure 3 – Number of Floors in Friendly Buildings

Of the studied buildings, 35% were low-rise, 24% were medium-rise and 41% were high-rise (see Figure 4). The average height was 22 meters with an average density of 2.5 FSR<sup>15</sup>.

The tallest building was the Bluesky rental property in Chinatown that has a height of 45.7 meters and density of 9.29 FSR.

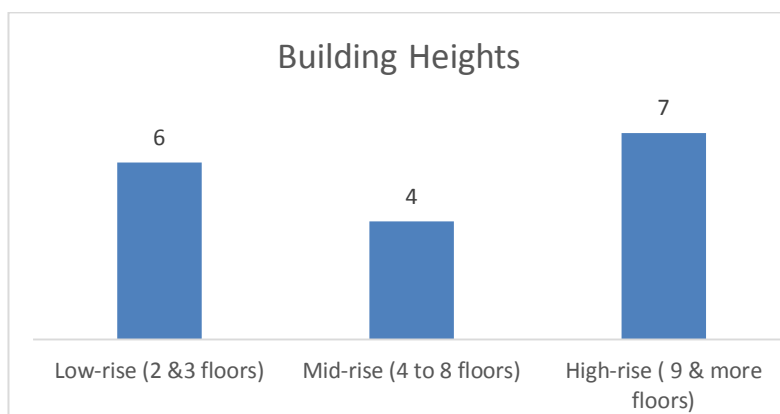


Figure 4 - Count of Buildings Based on Their Height

<sup>15</sup> FSR for some of the buildings were estimated due to lack of available data

# Friendly Buildings - An Overview

## Zoning and Land Use

Most of the buildings were built in CD1 zones, which allowed them the increased density or unique architectural design required for the complex. The two buildings with live/work status were both built in light industrial zones. As for land use, except in one case with a CD1 zoning, the rest were either residential or mixed-use.

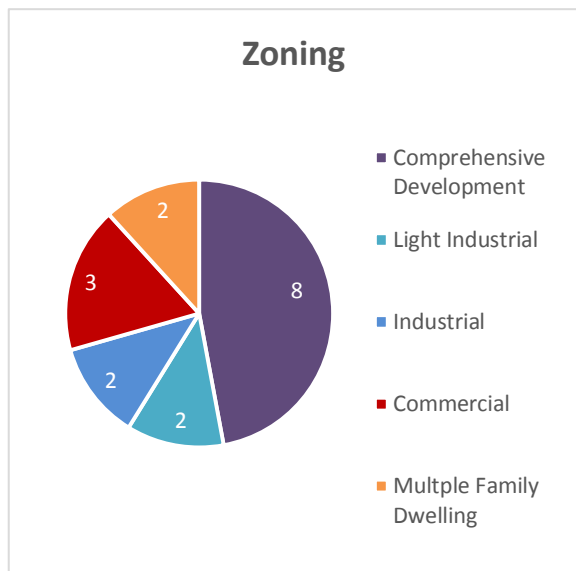


Figure 5 - Number of Buildings in Each Zoning Type

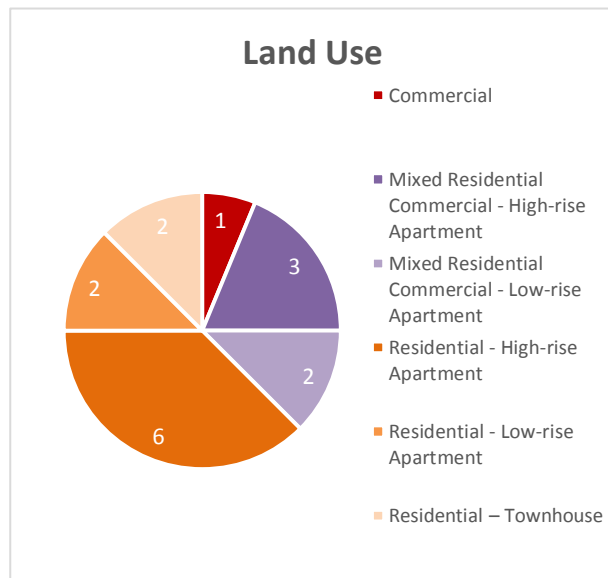


Figure 6 - Number of Buildings per Land Use category

## Demographics

Since most of the interviewees were residents of the buildings, they were not able to provide an exact count of number and type of residents who lived in their building. Based on general observations and estimates of the interviewees, more than 50% of the buildings had a prominent presence of families with young kids. A smaller percentage also included elderly and empty nesters. Students were not identified as a major population in any of the buildings.



>50%



10-20%



<5%<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Percentages are estimates



# Friendly Buildings - Hard Infrastructure

This section outlines a list of common design elements that were observed in the studied buildings. Each had a level of positive impact on the residents in the building and played a role in increasing social connections among residents.



Community Garden

58%

4 had communal gardens (including co-op & co-housing buildings), 6 had plots that got assigned through request or lottery



Amenity/Party Room

76%

bookable spaces: mainly on the ground floor, a few rooftop party rooms, and 2 galleries in live/work buildings



Workspace or Workshop

29%

work space, woodshop, or winemaking areas etc. that are typically led by residents



Rooftop Patio, BBQ Area

30%

identified as great spaces for residents to gather



Shared Kitchen

52%

4 of the buildings had a large kitchen to cook for large groups (including co-op & co-housing buildings)



Shared Supply Room

41%

a space that allows for sharing of items such as kitchenware, toys, books etc.



Shared Laundry

41%

less than half of the studied buildings also had in-suite laundry



Mixed-use

35%

everyday destinations at the building such as a coffee shop, grocery etc.



Balcony

100%

all buildings had a form of outdoor balcony or patio that was often used for individual gardening



Courtyard

65%

courtyards were in the center of the development and were activated and used by families and others



Playground

59%

half of the buildings had a playground situated in the courtyard, while the other had the playground on a rooftop or middle floor



Lobby and Bulletin Boards

35%

covered and furnished lobbies provided space for residents to connect and share events and business on common bulletin boards

# Friendly Buildings - Soft Infrastructure

Other non-design related factors also had a large impact on promoting or preventing connections among neighbours:



Pets

88%

identified as significant community connectors



Fobs

59%

used fobs to enter the building and their units. This made the residents feel safer but added difficulty to access other floors



Onsite Building Manager

59%

have limited influence on social elements. 4 were identified as key players in creating connections



Communication Methods

100%

residents in all buildings used some form of communications method to connect with each other. This ranged from notices in elevators to a Facebook page.



Social Events

100%

all buildings hosted social events to connect residents. The frequency and scale of which varied from once a year to weekly.



Champions

64%

had a passionate individual or group of residents that initiated social gathering, or created spaces for sharing and learning (including co-op & co-housing buildings).

In 3 cases these champions were the property managers.

## *Social Events*

Hosting events was a common social theme among all of the studied buildings. These events were held within the building and ranged in regularity. Here is the list of different types of events that worked well:

- o Annual Events

A party or decorating event where residents would socialize around a common holiday and do things together.

- Solstice party
- Christmas party
- Halloween party/pumpkin carving
- Easter egg hunt for kids

# Friendly Buildings - Soft Infrastructure

- Social mix and mingle
- Wine sharing/tasting
- Block parties (organized by multiple buildings, supported by Vancouver Foundation and City of Vancouver)
- An annual event where new and old residents can meet (even before moving in)
- A building competition or challenge with prizes contributed from strata or the property management company
- AGMs
- Weekly Events
  - Saturday morning coffee and baked goods
  - Sunday brunch in the lobby or patio area
- Garage Sales
  - Property managers hosting garage sales from leftover furniture and other items
  - Residents holding their own garage sales
- Bake Sales
- Harvesting parties for buildings that have communal gardens
  - Meeting for harvesting weekly or bi-weekly in the harvest season
- Sharing meals
  - Multiple meals per week (as done in co-housing)
  - On a common holiday
  - Hosting a dinner a few times after the harvest to share the produce grown collectively
  - Pizza nights
- Play Dates
  - Getting parents and kids to visit a nearby park, community center, school, or day care etc.
  - Use the playground, courtyard or shared supply room to gather
- Starting a book club / book sharing
- Donation days
  - Setting up a space for donated items to be stored

## *Champions*

Residents themselves had great influence on how friendly their building would get. In more than half of the buildings a committed and passionate person/ people had a major role in connecting the neighbours. In a few examples, on-site property managers took on this role. Here are some examples:

- A passionate individual who would use their knowledge in an area or interest for community building towards increasing the sociability in their building. Strata councils, co-op and co-housing managers as well as property managers could encourage this behaviour by recognizing and supporting these individual efforts.
  - In one of the buildings a resident takes on the financial burden of buying food and cooking celebratory meals for his fellow neighbours. In another building, the champions sought funding from their strata or other grant giving organizations in Vancouver to implement their project.
- Social committees that are traditionally part of the co-op and co-housing structures appeared organically in a handful of the rental or strata buildings. Resident groups came together to plan and host social events at their building. These committees seemed to be much more successful when supported by strata or other governing structure of the building.
  - Strata members can support these committees by legitimatizing them through sponsorship (monetary or legally).
- Property Managers were very successful in taking on the role of creating connections among residents. They had the legal authority and financial means to host successful events and other initiatives.
  - In two examples, they engaged the local businesses to participate and donate to building events.

# Friendly Buildings - Special Features

Each building in this study had unique design features or programs that made them successful in creating a sense of community in their building. The stories below describe the process of how each of these initiatives came to be. These buildings had multiple contributing factors to their sociability, but only a few of their distinctive features have been detailed here.

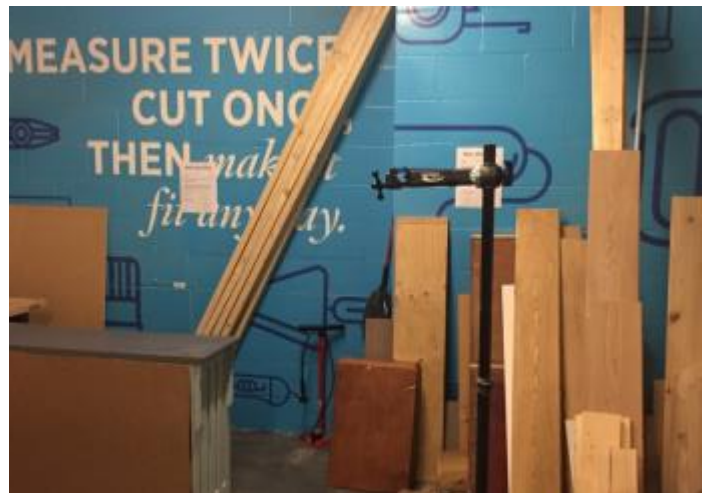
## *Collectively Designed and Used Workspace*

- Changing dead spaces to skill sharing and craft making places
  - In the Artiste live/work building, the community manager worked with residents to change a leftover storage space to a wood-working/painting workshop. Since the Artiste building is a live/work building this was received very positively by the renters. As one of regular users of the space said:

“I used to be tenant, now I am part of a community”
  - In the BlueSky development, the developer created a workshop in one of the parking levels. This facility is managed by 24 site-managers and can be used by any interested resident.
  - The False Creek Co-op also has a wine making as well as a wood working shop.



*Paint and Woodworking Shop at Artiste*



*Wood Workshop at BlueSky*

## *Communal Gardens*

- Converting the landscaping to communal gardens, and working with strata to set it up
  - In the James building, a 12-story development in Olympic Village, two residents who were passionate about community building and agriculture transformed their rooftop garden to a communal garden where residents plant and harvest together. They worked with their strata council to educate their neighbours about their options. Residents then voted and chose the communal garden options as opposed to individual plots. They were able to get funding from their strata to purchase tools and got permission to set up an irrigation system. They have also received funding from the Vancouver Foundation to run their garden.

“The next thing you know, we were making plans outside of gardening. We were planning social gatherings together, going for drinks, hanging out at the beach.”

# Friendly Buildings - Special Features

- In the 3333 Main and the Social developments, the plotted gardens work effectively to connect the neighbours. It is situated in the middle floor and is viewable from balconies. It is only accessible through the community room and connected to children's playground area.



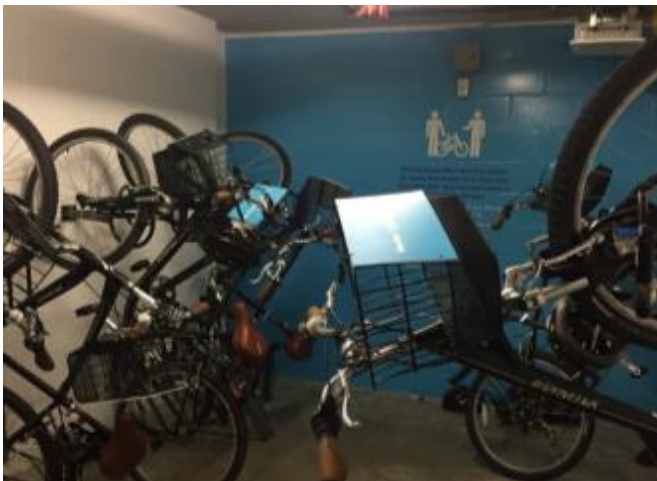
Community Garden and Residents at The James



Plotted Garden at 3333 Main

## Intentional Interactive Spaces

- Developing spaces that initiate conversations between people rather than awkward elevator chats
  - The BlueSky development has a bike and pet wash facility which encourages connections around pets and similar interests. They also have their own private bike share program.



Bike Share Room at BlueSky



Pet and Bike Wash at BlueSky

# Friendly Buildings - Special Features

## *Courtyards for Everyone*

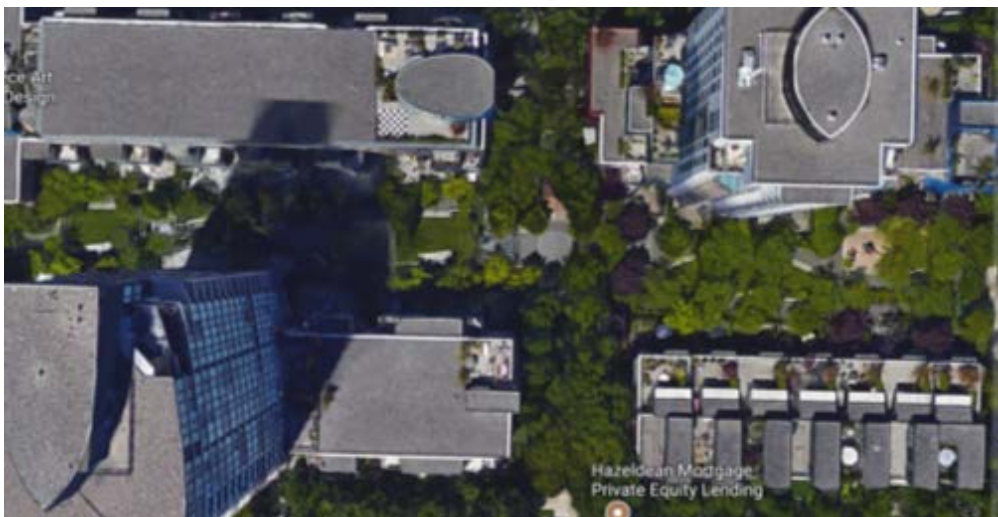
- Building courtyards in the center of developments that are accessible and viewable to all units
  - Sixteen Willows is a development with a mix of townhouses and condos. Most units are ground-oriented and all have access to a large courtyard. The courtyard has naturally become a gathering place for the residents – they even hold their AGMs there. There is enough space for the kids to play, and parents can keep an eye on them. All residents have to walk through the courtyard to enter or exist the complex.
  - In the Works, a family-oriented townhouse development, a central courtyard is where parents gather while kids play and social events take place. This physical space has brought the residents together which led to the creation of a WhatsApp group. Now parents organize events using this group chat.
  - The Siena of Portico is part of a four-building development in Fairview. It is connected to its adjacent building through a courtyard and greenway which is heavily used by families, kids and elderly residents.



*Courtyard at Sixteen Willows*



*Courtyard and Playground at The Works*



*Connecting Greenway at Siena of Portico*

# Friendly Buildings - Special Features

## *Communal Living as a Philosophy*

- Co-op and co-housing development principles and social commitments significantly enhance social connections
  - Newly built Vancouver Co-housing includes a large kitchen and dining area where people sign up to cook, eat and clean a few times a week. These townhouses connect via a large courtyard, and residents are often seen in conversation with each other.
  - Built in the 1970's, False Creek Co-op is one of the most successful co-ops in Vancouver. They have multiple committees that take care of different aspects of the building (such as board of directors, finance, membership, internal building maintenance, external building maintenance, grounds/gardening). False Creek Co-op benefits from long-term residents and security of tenure because of a group of committed residents who have joined these committees.
  - Quayside Village Co-housing only has nine units which has helped magnify the connections between the long-term residents over the past twenty years. Living a communal life, they are aware of each other's health concerns and keep an eye on each other. As one of the home owners who lived there from the start said:

*"My unit is not my only home; the whole complex is."*



*Dining Area at Vancouver Co-housing*



*False Creek Co-op*

## *Live/Work works!*

- Among the 17 buildings there were two live/work building. A positive correlation was observed between living and working in one's residence and connecting with like-minded neighbours.
  - The Artiste building only accepts renters who align with the building's artistic community. They also host regular exhibits and shows in their gallery space.
  - The Mainspace Lofts, strata live/work building, are habituated by residents from different industries. Many people also run their businesses from their homes and offer services to their neighbours that enhance connections. This development has large corridors where people pass by each other every day and even host social events. Residents are also able to customize their doors (paint and hang items).

# Friendly Buildings - Special Features



*Gallery at Artiste*



*Corridors at Mainspace*

## *Resident Champions*

- Utilizing the interest and passion of residents for community building
  - In Martinique, a high-rise in the West End, a retired resident keeps a supply of decorations and brings the neighbours together over holidays. He also makes his own wine and hosts dinner parties for his fellow neighbours on special occasions. Another resident has a list of his fellow neighbours and lends a hand to the elderly in the building whenever needed.

*“When I am hosting, my door is always open. People can come in anytime and have a glass of wine with us.”*

- Similarly, in Quayside Village, one resident’s passion for recycling created an initiative and received support from strata. He put a committee together to compartmentalize the recycling room, and take different items to the appropriate plants.



*Martinique’s Passionate Resident (Otto Pfisteo)*



*Recycling Room at Quayside Village Co-housing*



# Friendly Buildings - Special Features

## *Lobby and Communal Amenity Spaces Matter*

- A welcoming lobby and large communal space as well as weather-appropriate shelters are important
  - District Main, a rental building in East Van, is built with a large and welcoming lobby where most of the building's social events take place. It also has a large patio garden which is used for these social events organized by the property manager/developer, Kevington Building Corp.
  - A high-rise in South Granville area, the Forte Building, has a sheltered lobby area where residents stop for a coffee and muffin on Saturdays, organized by their property management company, Bentall Kennedy.
  - Co-housing developments are example models in creating effective communal amenity spaces.



*Lobby at Forte*



*Main Lobby and Amenity Room at District Main*

## *Creative Problem Solving*

- A property manager can play a role in cultivating connections by using creative problem solving
  - In the Artiste, one of the building managers used complaints as an opportunity to create solutions in collaboration with residents. For example, a small doggy daycare group was created because one person complained about a badly behaving dog. In this case, the manager put the owner in touch with other dog owners in the building. Similar groups are formed in the building using the same approach.



*Wall Painting in the Lobby of Artiste Building*

# Friendly Buildings - Special Features

## *Building and Community Managers are Essential*

- On-site building/community managers are strategically situated to promote a culture of community within a building through programs and actions
  - The District Main building management group and developer, Kevington Building Corp, has a strong emphasis on creating communities within and outside of their properties. They set a budget and host social events ranging from mix & mingles to planting & harvesting. They grow edibles in the communal garden, distribute the produce to the residents and donate the extra. They also engage local businesses in social events.
  - The Artiste has two passionate and skilled community managers who work at the building fulltime. They select renters who fit within the culture of the building and work in similar Arts related industries. With their extensive managerial experience, they are able to resolve conflicts while creating a strong sense of community in the building. As one of the managers, Tim Hiltz, mentioned:

“We chose to work and live in this building because it had all the things we love: our home, our dogs, our garden, our community”



*District Main's Operations Manager (Michael Gunion)*



*The Artiste's Community Manager (Mark Hiltz)*

Source: VancouverCourier

## *Communication Methods that Work for Everyone*

- To communicate most effectively with residents, and between residents, multiple channels are used.
  - False Creek co-ops used monthly printed newsletters and distributed them among residents. The newsletter helped make people aware of what was happening in their building and learned about each other. Printing and distributing newsletters works for those who do not use computers. People also used a bulletin board situated in the courtyard to share information.
  - Vancouver Co-housing has multiple online (list serves), and offline (tasks board, whiteboards) systems to assign tasks to committees and individuals, book spaces and communicate with residents.

# Friendly Buildings - Special Features



*Bulletin Board at False Creek Co-op*



*Task Board at Vancouver Co-housing*

## *Families Connect*

- Having people in similar lifestages in the building allows for formation of social groups
  - In the Woodward's family housing complex, a 7 story below-market housing, most families meet at the playground on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. Although the playground and the party room are great amenities, one of the residents felt that it was surrounded with "too much concrete" and didn't leave much space for parents to linger to have a BBQ and socialize.
  - In the Social, a new 9 story building with townhouses on the main floor, about 30% of the residents are families. The orientation of the units and common interest of kids has brought a large group of mothers together who socialize using an iMessage group. A rooftop playground, plotted gardens and a very small amenity room is where the parents and the rest of the neighbours meet. The building is adjacent to Mount Pleasant Community Center which is another convening place for families.



*Rooftop Garden and Playground at The Social*



*Playground at Woodward's Family Housing*

# Recommendations

The recommendations below represent key information and suggestions extracted from the interviews that go beyond the examples outlined in the special feature section. It is important to note that the City of Vancouver may not be in the position to implement every recommendation in here, however partnering with industry leaders such as developers, architects, strata associations, and property managers could make this possible.

## Built Form



*The Mainspace Lofts*

### Increase high-rise developments with townhouses on ground level

In this work a positive connection has been identified between ground-oriented high-rise developments and sociability of residents. This can be attributed to the fact that townhouses usually house families and kids which requires that courtyards and playgrounds are built in. Such spaces allow families and other residents to come together.

### Build horizontal density

This is in reference to larger sites with a stretched out mid-rise development (3-6 stories). The majority of buildings with successful sociability were (i) wide mid-rises with long hallways, (ii) with elevators positioned in the middle and (iii) large number of units. The long hallways or corridors offered an opportunity for neighbours to see each other on a regular basis. Having exterior walkways allowed for not only talking but also exposure to sunlight and nature, and even an opportunity to hold events. It is acknowledged that this type of development requires a large land acquisition by the developers.

### Allow for more live/work zoning

Having people work and live in the same space enhanced sociability. It brought like-minded people together and allowed for mixed use of space.

### Incorporate multiple gathering spaces (with access to nature)

Patios, balconies, playgrounds in the middle of developments viewable from all units were an important factor in sociability of a building.

# Recommendations

## Build units that are expandable so that families can grow into them

This enhances security of tenure and creates stronger connection to the community and the neighbourhood. To make this possible, a mix of unit types and bedrooms need to be built into the buildings that families can move to.

## Mandate sociable design elements

With the current housing climate, soft guidelines are not creating sufficient change in the industry. Hard regulations are required.

## Develop intentional space

Examples include, pets wash, bike wash, and workshops where people work on hobbies, share and learn for each other.

## Work with LandlordBC to add a sociability elements to the “Certified Rental Building” program

CRB (Certified Rental Building) is a quality assurance program for multi-unit residential apartment buildings that is offered to LandlordBC members.

## Encourage resident serving mixed-use developments

In many buildings residents appreciated having a “public on-site destination” business within their building (e.g. a coffee shop or grocery store). They could be placed where neighbours frequently see each other and connect. It was pointed out that up-scale stores that do not fit within the neighbourhood can have the opposite effect.

# Recommendations

## Strata and Property Managers



*Kevington Building Corp Staff at the District Main Building*

### Strata councils and property managers are key strategic partners in moving the sociable building movement forward

Strata councils, Co-op boards, and rental management companies can facilitate social connections through policies or practices that enable longer term, secure renting. In many interviews, residents in ownership buildings mentioned that they felt having mostly owner-occupied units created a stronger commitment to the building and caused stronger connections among residents, primarily as a result of longer-term residents. For strata buildings with secondary rentals or purpose built rental buildings, strata councils and rental managers should ensure renters feel welcome and able to stay, and policies could encourage longer-term tenancies. Strata councils and rental building property managers can play a facilitator role by welcoming new renters, bringing residents across tenures together, and encouraging a sense of belonging and responsibility amongst all residents.

### Hire property managers and community builders, and not just a concierge

A major finding from this research showed that having property managers who are narrowly focused on maintenance will not yield stronger connections in the building. Skilled individuals with strong conflict management and people skills are needed to build a strong yet friendly community in a building.

### Allow residents to customize their units

Doors and balconies can be customized so that neighbours can share their values and culture, and learn more about each other.

### Learn from industry leaders on how they govern and structure their buildings

The District Main and Artiste buildings are great examples of rental buildings with effective community managers that fund and run communal events .

### Allow residents to organize themselves and even promote their businesses/initiatives

# Recommendations

This can be facilitated by installing a physical bulletin board in amenity rooms and the lobby that residents can post on. They can also promote the use of online communication platforms as more people are spending their time online

## Encourage the use of community gardens

Residents can be educated about communal gardens and choose to run one. This model has shown to increase the connectedness among residents much more than individual plots.

## Encourage sharing

Designate a space within the building where residents can share supplies such as children's toys, books or even camping equipment.

## Host and support social events

Strata or property management events are largely attended by all residents. It is an opportunity to bring new and old neighbours together. Having access to funding made it easier for these organizations to host such events. They can also encourage residents to create social committees and support them in their efforts.

## Respect privacy of residents

Not all residents wanted to share their contact information and receive information. It is important that strata councils and management companies keep the lists confidential. Also, social media communications and participation in events should not be mandatory. This reduced conflict and created a stronger community among those who are interested.

# Recommendations

## Social Etiquette



*The James Building*

### Know that you won't love all your neighbours

Community building is not without its challenges and conflict arises often when people live in close proximity of each other. It is important to keep this in mind and realize that not all residents of a building will be friends and get along.

### Not everyone will be actively participating in community building

One of the co-op community leaders that was interviewed mentioned that on average about 10% of the residents usually get engaged and join committees. Expectations need to be adjusted to reflect this reality. Energy can be best spent focusing on those who are motivated to participate and to encourage those who might be inclined to.

### Balance between privacy and public interaction

Even in the co-op and co-housing models, not all residents like to socialize at all times. The design of the building should allow for residents to stay private when needed. Neighbours should stay aware of this when it comes to social interactions.



# Recommendations

## Co-housing and Co-op



*The Quayside Village*

### Incorporate co-housing/co-ops into master community plans

The City of Vancouver can plan and encourage these types of developments through zoning and allowing for large areas of new development, such as comprehensive developments.

### Assign city planners to support co-housing projects

Interviews with co-housing residents demonstrated that they can benefit from more support from the City of Vancouver in the design and development of their property. The "Vancouver Co-housing" project took about 7 years to complete. Residents indicated that an assigned city planner aware of the policies and regulations at the City would have been of great value to them.

# Recommendations

## Neighbourhood Development



*Playground close to False Creek Co-op*

### Public space

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council <sup>17</sup>, a substantial part of improving health and well-being of cities is creating communities where everyone can thrive. This includes creating public spaces that cultivate physical and social conditions that are critical to making healthier communities for all. There is also a large opportunity to bring life to places between the buildings, as Danish architect Jan Gehl points out.

### Green space with family-oriented neighbourhoods

This study showed that developing family-friendly buildings might not be sufficient to extend tenancy terms. Being surrounded by concrete high-rises and lack of green space in the neighbourhood could cause families to move out despite design and programming efforts.

### Walkability and access to transit is important

Sociability was higher in developments that were situated in walkable neighbourhoods with great access to transit. Neighbours ran into each other more often outside of their building.

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<sup>17</sup> 3 Lessons from Denmark for Investing in People and Places

# Recommendations

## Next Steps

Buildings that were identified in this work will be featured in the City of Vancouver's "Friendly Multi-unit Building Field Trip" in the fall of 2017. Partnering agencies and industry leaders who expressed interest in learning more about sociability in multi-unit building will be participating in this field trip. A one-page building profile has been created for each of the buildings (See Appendix II). The goal of this project is to learn from these examples and start a conversation on how to implement short-term actions and long-term policy change.

In addition, CoV has partnered with Vancouver Coastal Health and received a grant from PlanH to run a pilot Community Concierge program in two buildings for a year. Live-in community concierges will test methods to develop and support social connections within rental buildings. This project aims to help enhance the City's understanding of what tools, techniques, and cultural norms can best help residents to connect in multi-unit rental buildings.

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# Appendix 1- Questionnaire

## Friendly Multi-unit Building Interview Questionnaire

1. Building Name:
2. Address:
3. Neighbourhood:
4. Age:
5. Developer & Architect:
6. Building Manager:
7. Number of floors and units:
  - Units in each floor
8. Building demographic (% for each category)
  - Students
  - Singles
  - Young Couples no kids
  - Young Families with babies and toddlers
  - Young Families with young children (elementary)
  - Families with older children (high school and university)
  - Empty nesters
  - Elderly
9. What is your perception of building turnover, change in residents?
  - Frequent (many new residents each year, few long-term tenants)
  - Modest (some new residents each year, some long-term tenants)
  - Low (few new residents each year, many long-term tenants)
10. Ownership model:
  - Co-op
  - Co-housing
  - Market Rental
  - Social Housing
  - Strata condominium
11. Rental Allowed? (including rented condos, AirBnB, sublets, etc.)
12. Rental restrictions? (# of units, % of units, waitlist)
13. Pets Allowed? (1 or 2, size restriction)
14. On site building manager:
  - Yes
    - Hours spent on property
    - Name
  - No
15. What are the Building Manager's main responsibilities?
16. Features supporting connection:
  - Bike Room
  - Party/ Gathering Room
  - Shared Works Space
  - Shared outdoor space (ground or roof)
  - Community Garden beds
  - Gym
  - Playground
  - Court Yard
  - Coffee shop
  - Lobby with mail and notice board
  - Shared bbqs/cooking facilities
  - Other:
17. Main connecting features – explain:

- Architectural Design
  - Soft programming (site manager, events, etc.)
  - Cultural setting or group dynamics
  - Other:
18. Online Building Communication Tool(s):
    - Facebook
    - List Serve
    - Google groups
    - App
    - Other:
  19. What are the main communication method (online or offline) for the residents to connect with each other?
  20. What are some other elements in your neighbourhood/ place that might impact your building's neighbourliness? (ex. parks, school, public realm)
  21. How often do residents get together to:
    - solve a pending issue
    - promote cultural or personal celebrations
  22. Parking spaces: how many per unit?
    - Are they using all of them? Is parking spaces included in the rent (in case there are rentals)?
    - Is storage space included in the rent?
  23. How are residents in contact with nature?
    - Community garden
    - Window pots
    - Corridor plants
    - Plants along the stairways
    - Front yard
    - Back yard
    - Green street
    - Close park (less than 150m)
  24. Do units have balconies/patios? Size? Are these private or shared?
  25. How long does it take you to get to
    - a transit stop:
    - groceries:
    - a park:
    - services (medical, pharmacy, bank, etc)
    - a community centre
  26. What kind of neighbourhood is the building in or adjacent to? (in residents' word – how they describe the area)
  27. How they feel safe? (why or why not)

# Appendix 2 - Sample Building Profile

## Low-Rise

### Quayside Village

Lower Lonsdale, North Vancouver

**Building Information**

- **Address:** 5100 Chesterfield Ave., North Vancouver, B.C. V7M 2L9
- **Developers:** Community Dream-Creators
- **Architect:** The Courtyard Group
- **Year Built:** 1998
- **Ownership Model:** Cohousing
- **Number of Floors:** 4 stories
- **Building Typology:** Low density
- **Units:** 3 owned units, 1 rental unit
- **Unit Types:** 1 and 2 bedroom suites & 2 and 3 bedroom townhouses
- **Residents Communication Method:** Bulletin boards and Google group
- **Security System:** No fobs
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Multiple garden plots, Rooftop garden, Shared kitchen, Dining area, Movie lounge, Shared laundry, Guest room, Furnished lobby and fireplace, Meditation room, Compost area, Bike room
- **Community Amenities:** Walkable neighbourhood, Close to bus stops, Seabus, local market, parks, schools
- **Demographics:** Retirees, Couples, Families with kids and teenagers
- **Winner of:** Silver Georgie Award for Best Low-Rise Development

## Friendly Buildings - A Case Study

**Soft Infrastructure**

- Collective input from residents on building design
- All residents sit on Strata (there is no hierarchy)
- Self-selected committee involvement
- Utilizing residents' passion to create champions in different areas of building management

**Hard Infrastructure**

- Central courtyard visible from units on all floors
- Townhouses that open to the courtyard
- Large shared external corridors
- Large garden beds throughout the development
- Specious Common House with a communal kitchen



Quayside Village

*"I moved out of my single family home to Quayside and never missed it for a day"*

People are connected as they know each other for a long time and manage their building through various committees. All owners sit on the Strata council and self-select themselves to different committees such as finance, treasury, and maintenance.

Although units have their own kitchen, residents have a cooking schedule and share many meals together. Everyone knows the kids in the village and parents feel supported as their neighbours keep an eye on their kids when they play in the courtyard or the play area.

*"We had to move after our second child was born, but we came back for community meals twice a week or so. As a young family with no relatives around we could not imagine a community that could provide us with such amazing support."*

*"It was especially nice for my wife who is a stay at home mom with young children, to have company and neighbours around."*

The Common House is used for many private and public events. One of the residents uses the space to teach music and another hosts dance circles here. The rooftop meditation room was also been used for business use over the years. There is a Doula in the building who runs her office from the main floor which draws many families to the building.

One of the unique features of Quayside village is their complex yet organized and very effective recycling facility which is led by a resident who is passionate about recycling.

*"You always need a champion for different things. For example I started our recycling, organized the room and now takes each item to specific depots"*

There are no high security entrances or fobs to enter each floor, but residents stated that they feel safe and secure because they know each other and keep an eye on the whole building.



Furnished lobby and fireplace



Recycling room



Kids area with shared toys and books



Common House and kitchen



Central courtyard



Rooftop garden and meditation room

## Low-Rise

### Quayside Village

Lower Lonsdale, North Vancouver

**Building Information**

- **Address:** 5100 Chesterfield Ave., North Vancouver, B.C. V7M 2L9
- **Developers:** Community Dream-Creators
- **Architect:** The Courtyard Group
- **Year Built:** 1998
- **Ownership Model:** Cohousing
- **Number of Floors:** 4 stories
- **Building Typology:** Low density
- **Units:** 3 owned units, 1 rental unit
- **Unit Types:** 1 and 2 bedroom suites & 2 and 3 bedroom townhouses
- **Residents Communication Method:** Bulletin boards and Google group
- **Security System:** No fobs
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Multiple garden plots, Rooftop garden, Shared kitchen, Dining area, Movie lounge, Shared laundry, Guest room, Furnished lobby and fireplace, Meditation room, Compost area, Bike room
- **Community Amenities:** Walkable neighbourhood, Close to bus stops, Seabus, local market, parks, schools
- **Demographics:** Retirees, Couples, Families with kids and teenagers
- **Winner of:** Silver Georgie Award for Best Low-Rise Development

## Friendly Buildings - A Case Study

**Soft Infrastructure**

- Collective input from residents on building design
- All residents sit on Strata (there is no hierarchy)
- Self-selected committee involvement
- Utilizing residents' passion to create champions in different areas of building management

**Hard Infrastructure**

- Central courtyard visible from units on all floors
- Townhouses that open to the courtyard
- Large shared external corridors
- Large garden beds throughout the development
- Specious Common House with a communal kitchen



Quayside Village

*"I moved out of my single family home to Quayside and never missed it for a day"*

People are connected as they know each other for a long time and manage their building through various committees. All owners sit on the Strata council and self-select themselves to different committees such as finance, treasury, and maintenance.

Although units have their own kitchen, residents have a cooking schedule and share many meals together. Everyone knows the kids in the village and parents feel supported as their neighbours keep an eye on their kids when they play in the courtyard or the play area.

*"We had to move after our second child was born, but we came back for community meals twice a week or so. As a young family with no relatives around we could not imagine a community that could provide us with such amazing support."*

*"It was especially nice for my wife who is a stay at home mom with young children, to have company and neighbours around."*

The Common House is used for many private and public events. One of the residents uses the space to teach music and another hosts dance circles here. The rooftop meditation room was also been used for business use over the years. There is a Doula in the building who runs her office from the main floor which draws many families to the building.

One of the unique features of Quayside village is their complex yet organized and very effective recycling facility which is led by a resident who is passionate about recycling.

*"You always need a champion for different things. For example I started our recycling, organized the room and now takes each item to specific depots"*

There are no high security entrances or fobs to enter each floor, but residents stated that they feel safe and secure because they know each other and keep an eye on the whole building.



Furnished lobby and fireplace



Recycling room



Kids area with shared toys and books



Common House and kitchen



Central courtyard



Rooftop garden and meditation room

# Mid-Rise

## 3333 Main

Main Street, Vancouver

### Building Information

- **Address:** 3333 Main St, East Vancouver, B.C V5V 3M8
- **Developers:** Bastion Development
- **Architect:** DIALOG
- **Year Built:** 2012
- **Ownership Model:** Strata
- **Number of Floors:** 5 stories
- **Building Typology:** Mixed use, Medium density
- **Units:** 98 suits
- **Unit Type:** Studio, 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms and laneway townhouses
- **Residents Communication Method:** Facebook
- **Security System:** Fobs
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Shared garden, Amenity room (Club House), Bike room, Storage
- **Community Amenities:** Walkable neighbourhood, Close to bus stops, shops, multiple parks with playgrounds, schools
- **Demographics:** Singles, Couples, Families with kids, Elderly



3333 Main

"I met most of my neighbours at the garden. We talk and share produce. We even take care of each other's plots when people are away."

### What makes this building friendly?

#### Soft Infrastructure

- Christmas party organized by Strata
- Garden and bike committees
- Block parties that bring multiple building residents together (funded by NSG)

#### Hard Infrastructure

- Community garden (20 plots that are assigned for a 2 year term)
- Units with balconies that look down to the garden
- Amenity room with furniture used for private events as well as building events
- Small play area for kids accessible through amenity room. Parents can use the amenity room while watching the kids
- Long hallways with 20 units in each floor and one elevator in the middle
- Creative and interactive space in front of the building



Club House



Balconies Facing the Garden



Community Garden



# Appendix 3 – Neighbourhood Online Communication Platforms



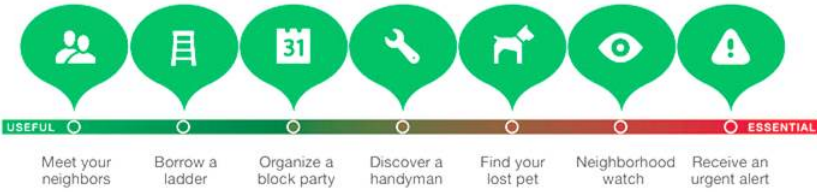
## Platform Inventory



# Platform Inventory - Locations

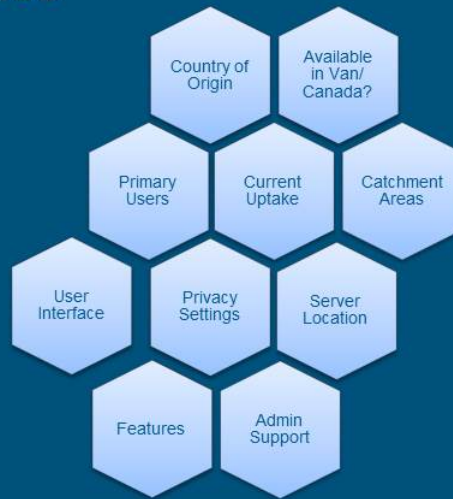


# Platform Inventory - Functions



Source: Nextdoor.com

## Criteria Evaluated



## Features

- Connecting Residents
- Buy/Sell or Sharing
- Lost/Found
- Notice Board
- Creating Clubs/ Events
- Newsletters
- Safety Procedures/ Alerts
- Connect with Civic Services
- Municipal Tool
- Promoting Local Jobs/ Businesses
- Referral for Local Services



# Platform Inventory - Social Influence



**Nextdoor (US)**

- Nabo (Australia)
- Peerby (US)
- Transition Network (Global)
- Streetbank (UK)
- EveryBlock (US)

**Nextdoor (US)**

- Transition Network (Global)
- Ask for task (Canada)
- Streetbank (UK)
- Park Bench (Canada)
- Peerby (US)

# Creating Connections in Single Family Neighbourhoods

# Platform Inventory - Connecting



Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Originated in US</li> <li>•Also available in the UK and Netherlands</li> </ul>
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Community building</li> <li>•Safety</li> <li>•Emergency preparedness</li> </ul>
Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Interactive Map</li> <li>•Setting your own boundaries</li> <li>•Connecting with municipal services</li> </ul>
Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•160,000 Neighbourhoods in US (75%)</li> </ul>
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Need to verify address to see neighbourhood information</li> </ul>



## Neighbourhood Setup:



# Creating Connections Through Sharing and Selling

## Platform Inventory - Share, Buy, Sell





- Cities**
  - Originated in Toronto, Canada
- Functions**
  - Community building
  - Buy, Sell and share
- Size**
  - 20 Neighbourhoods in Toronto
- Security**
  - Need to verify address within the neighbourhood



# Creating Connections in Vertical Communities

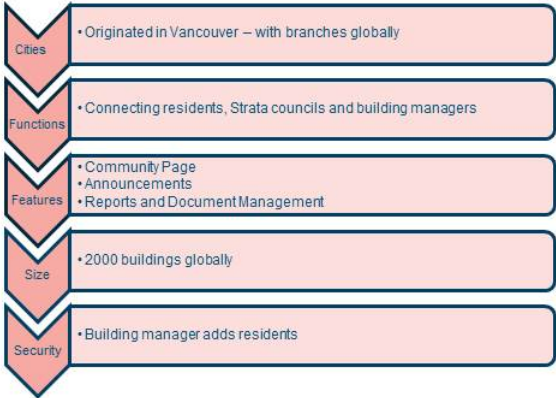


# Platform Inventory - Vertical Communities

***bazinga!***



***bazinga!***



# Creating Connections Through Municipal Engagement

Platform Inventory - Municipal Tool

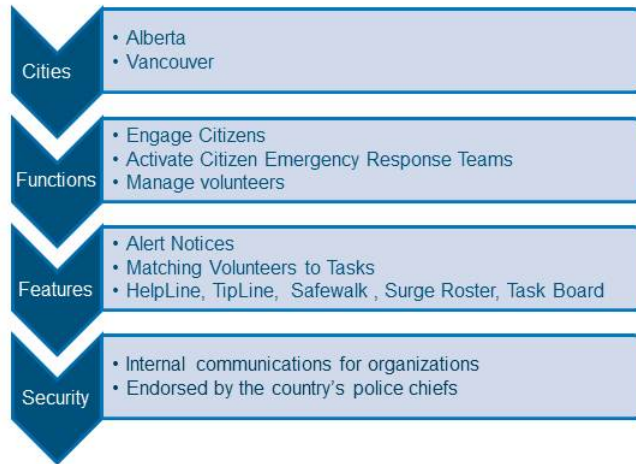


**Neighborland**

**SeeClickFix**



# Creating Connections for Emergency Preparedness



## Other Ways of Creating Connections

# Platform Inventory - Other



## Options in Vancouver

Bazinga

Village.io

Neighbour.org

